

## Relationship Based Sales Strategies for Technical Professionals



*Presented by:*

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## Learning Objectives

1. Identify weaknesses in current communication style.
2. Develop more effective communication skills.
3. Apply effective communication skills with current and prospective clients.



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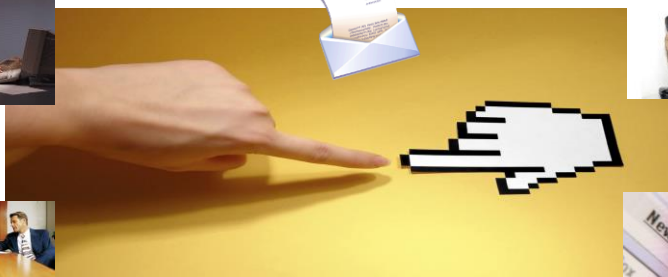


## We are All Marketers Now!

*Touchpoints: The "Customer Journey"*



**"Customer experience"** is the sum total of all contact points, interactions, transactions, and encounters between a customer and a company, its brands, and its various product and service offerings over a determined period of time."  
(*Flip the Funnel*, Jaffe)



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## Building Relationships

### *Trust and Rapport*



*Suggestion: Make one personal and/or positive comment to each customer per transaction.*

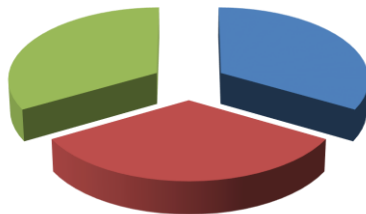
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## Three Dimensions of Communication



Words

Tone

Body Language



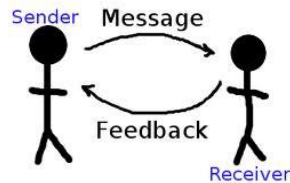
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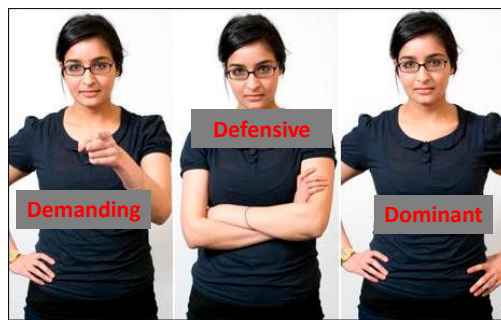
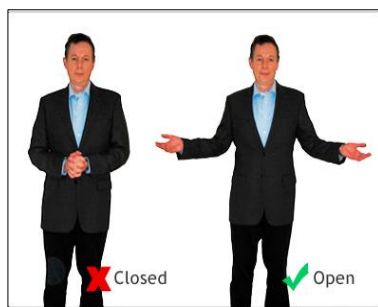


## The “Fourth” Dimension: Listening



- Communication in all forms is a two way process.
- Listen carefully to what your clients *are* & *aren't* saying to you.
- Listen without interrupting. Repeat phrases to show understanding.
- Practice the P-R-R Method: Pause, Reflect and Respond.

## Body Language



## Assess the Tone

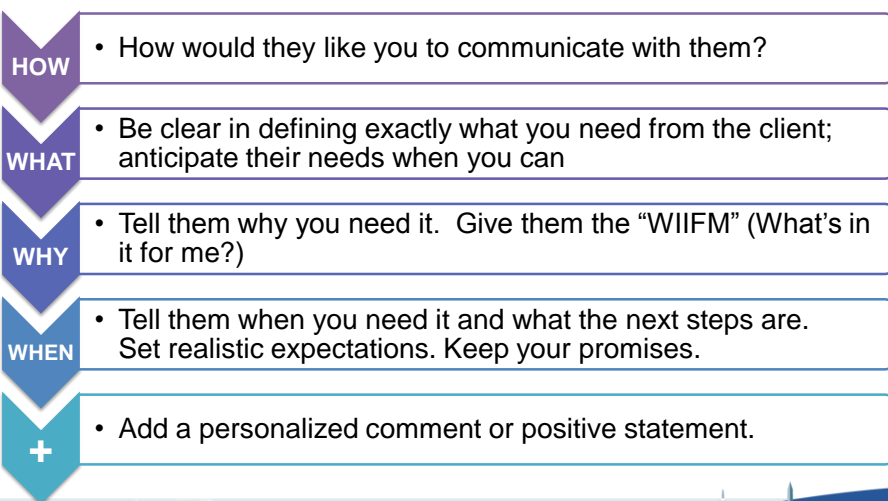


Abrasive	Cold	Factual	Informative
Aggressive	Condescending	Formal	Insulting
Appreciative	Courteous	Friendly	Polite
Assertive	Defensive	Helpful	Redundant
Blunt	Demanding	Honest	Sarcastic
Casual	Enlightening	Informal	Sincere



## Client Communications

*Information requests, etc.*

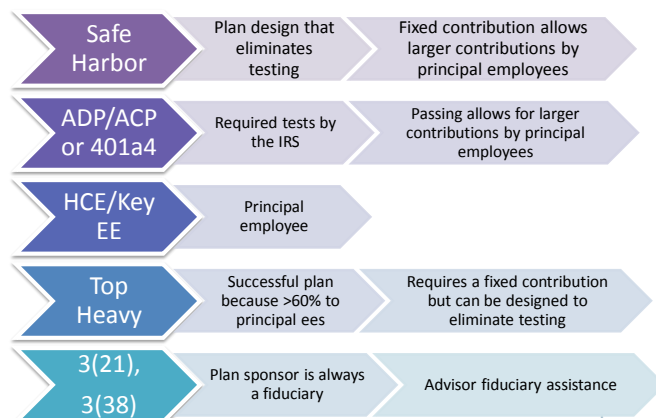


## Avoid Jargon

*Give them a chance to absorb and respond*

Brian Graff: "You know too much!"

Peter Simoneaux (plan sponsor): "You lost me at 401(k)."



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## Positive vs. Negative Language

We **regret** to inform you that we **cannot** process your enrollment, since you have **neglected** to provide sufficient information. Please complete **ALL** sections of the online form and submit it to us as soon as possible.

We are **delighted** that you want to participate in the ABC Company 401(k) plan!

We would like to complete your plan enrollment as soon as possible so that you can begin **enjoying** the benefits of the plan. Please complete the online form, filling in the highlighted areas, and **we will be able to** complete your enrollment **immediately**.

We **would be happy** to help you with your enrollment or with any questions you may have. Feel free to contact us at ###.###.####.



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## Avoid “Trigger” Words

### WORDS TO AVOID: (“trigger” words)

- No...
- I'll try...
- That's not our policy...
- That's not my job...
- You can't...
- I have no idea...
- You have to...
- You need to...
- You must...

### WORDS TO SAY: (positive or neutral statements)

- Here are some options...
- I will...
- Here's what I can do...
- Let's see what we can do...
- I'm confident that we can...
- I'll find out...
- The best thing for you to do is...
- What works well is to...
- ...< > will be required.



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## Positive Words

Be sure your messages include positive words like these, used sincerely:

value benefit enjoy pleasure pleased  
inspire enhance please thank you agree  
appreciate profit feel free saving honor  
help you assist you are welcome admire  
like glad delighted happy congratulations

We **value** your business, and we are **delighted** that you will be working with us at ABC. **Feel free** to contact us any time.



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## Avoid Negative Phrases and Connotations

- We regret to inform you that...
- Unfortunately, ...
- After numerous attempts to contact you, we have no choice but to ...
- Your failure to provide the requested items ...
- You must sign and return these forms by ...
- We appreciate your response, but we are still missing...
- *"To be honest, he is always late to meetings."*
- *"He never meets a deadline."*
- *"I'm afraid that I can't help you with that."*
- *"No problem."*



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## Positive vs. Negative Language

### Positive language

- Focuses on what *can* be done;
- Suggests actions and/or alternatives;
- Sounds helpful and encouraging rather than bureaucratic or accusing;
- Stresses positive actions and positive consequences.

### Negative language

- Focuses on what *can't* be done;
- Can have a subtle tone of blame;
- Can sound like a command;
- Demonstrates an unwillingness to help and/or offers no options.



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## Difficult Situations

### Delivering Bad News

- Carefully craft your first few sentences (no “trigger” words) – then listen!

### Listen and Learn

- The brain can't deal with logic until anger and frustration are put aside.

### Diffuse

- Stay calm and let the customer vent
- Give them permission to be upset or frustrated.
- Say “*You have every right to be upset.*”

### Apologize

- Choose apology words carefully when something was outside of your control.
- Say “*I'm so sorry this happened to you.*”

### Accept

- Face reality and accept responsibility. Do not place blame.



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## Technique: “Buffers”

### Express appreciation

- *“Thank you for being so patient and taking the time to work through this with me.”*

### Make a statement that both parties can agree on

- *“I agree with you that the new fee disclosures can be confusing. Let's step through them together.”*

### Compliment the client

- *“I'm so sorry this happened to you – you are one of our best clients and always send your information in timely.”*

### Express understanding of the situation and the client's needs

- *“I understand that you are leaving town and you need the report by Friday.”*



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## Observe: The World is Your Laboratory

*"A lot of people have fancy things to say about **Customer Service**, but it's just a day-in, day-out, ongoing, never-ending, unrelenting, persevering, compassionate kind of activity."*

- Leon A. Gorman, Chairman of the Board of L.L.Bean



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